

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election without the balance of giving equal time to an opposing opinion is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. This fits a pattern that they have shown of partisanship, both in campaign contributions and aired (and un-aired) content. This financial and content support has been productive from their perspective in terms of media regulatory policies favorable to their bottom line.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

As long as companies must worship the bottom line, they will always rate serving the public interest as irrelevant, unless they are required to do so. Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.